

National Defence Act Amendment

went back to the Prime Minister and made another threat, so the Prime Minister, having said he had read Air Chief Marshal Miller's testimony and having indicated that it deserved looking into, has now said he is once again in full support of the minister. The support of the minister has been on and off.

What interests me is that the testimony given to the defence committee by Air Chief Marshal Miller became available to this committee only today. So the Prime Minister was perhaps referring to the coverage given this matter by the press. If that is the case, I suggest that the Prime Minister should read carefully Air Chief Marshal Miller's testimony, and if he made a decision on the basis of press reports, having read this testimony I am sure the Prime Minister, in all fairness to the people of this country and the men and officers serving in the forces, will demand a second look at the unification bill.

In the committee an amendment was moved that before the unified force came into being members of the army, navy and air force, the services which are to disappear when unification becomes effective, be re-attested and that each and every individual serving in the forces be given the choice as to whether he was to become a member of the Canadian forces. The Judge Advocate General gave evidence before the committee that this is just a matter of paper, and is not necessary. I say to the minister that it is not just a matter of paper. It always was the practice, but that practice is being discontinued; whether legally, I do not know. However, it would not be difficult to produce for the minister evidence to the effect that men who during the war served in more than one service were discharged from that service before entering another. Having been discharged from that service, anybody who served in two of the services during the war obtained two discharge certificates. I do not know whether this is just a matter of paper, but the evidence given before the committee is something that I will not accept. I can produce for the minister discharges obtained by individuals which show service in the army and in one of the other services. In other words, it is not just a matter of paper, and before a man is signed into one service he must be discharged from the other.

Therefore why should it not follow that if you are going to wipe out the army, navy and air force, the men serving in those forces should be given the choice of entering the

unified force? It is said that this is not necessary, but there are a number of precedents in this country which indicate that it is necessary. During a national emergency, a time of war, no man in the services was required to do other than that for which he signed up. I would refer to the "Official History of the Canadian Army", which is recommended reading for the Minister of National Defence, who might learn something from it. I would point out that in the writing of this volume the author was given full access to relevant official documents in the possession of the Department of National Defence. On page 43 is set out the first precedent. This was referred to by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre, but it bears repeating because I believe that if you wish to get anything across to this minister you have to keep pounding and pounding and pounding, and even then I doubt whether it will sink in because he has a stubborn attitude, for his own political reasons.

The minister has never denied that he threatened to resign if his party did not back the unification bill. I referred to that matter 10 or 15 minutes ago, and I remember a former Speaker ruling an hon. member out of order for not taking up a question of privilege within seven or ten seconds. I raised this matter 10 or 15 minutes ago, but the minister has never denied that he threatened to resign if his unification bill was not passed. He cannot deny it now on a question of privilege, because the time allowed for this has expired. I would ask the minister to pay particular attention to these words which appear at page 43 of the book to which I have referred:

"Government decided to place militia on active service in Canada (mobile force). Although all submissions to council were ready and all plans made, we were horrified to hear—"

I repeat that.

—we were horrified to hear the cabinet decided at the last minute to change the name of the mobile force from "Canadian Field Force" to "Canadian Active Service Force". The result being many changes, torn up stencils, and \$65,000 worth of mobilization forms almost useless. Very hectic day—but we managed to get the general order 135/1939 issued and in the mail to all districts.

Here is a clear-cut precedent established during the time of an emergency, wartime, when it was required to re-attest all servicemen just because the cabinet at the last minute changed the name of the force. They were not abolishing any force; they were just changing the name of the force from Canadian Field Force to Canadian Active